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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Research Service
Washington 25, D. C.

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GYPSY MOTH CONTROL

NATURE OF THE PEST

This pest was introduced from France about 75 years ago. The adult is a moth about one inch long, which does no damage. The insect overwinters in the egg stage in clusters on trees, rocks, lumber, timber products, etc. Larvae begin to emerge in mid-April and feed on plant foliage. Females do not fly. Local spread to new areas can be by young caterpillars being carried in the wind. Egg clusters can be carried long distances on timber, pulpwood, lumber, quarry products, Christmas trees, nursery stock, etc.

CROPS AFFECTED

Forest trees attacked by the larvae include oak, gray birch, white pine, and others. Horticultural crops damaged include fruit trees and blueberries. Ornamentals and shade trees are also damaged.

DAMAGE AND ESTIMATED LOSSES

Caterpillars devour foliage in May and June so that trees are naked as in mid-winter. This damage can be prevented by airplane spray applications containing one pound of DDT per acre. More than a million and a half acres were completely defoliated in 1953 in New England and eastern New York. Dollar damage per year is difficult to estimate. Trees are retarded and killed, watersheds damaged, forests are made unsightly to tourists, yields of tree fruits are greatly reduced, and blueberries are rendered unprofitable when attacked.

CONTROL PROGRAM

Quarantine enforcement, insecticidal treatment of carriers, and suppression of infestations effectively prevent spread. A cooperative Federal-State program is under way to prevent spread of pests from New England and eastern New York to other areas suitable for their development in the Lake States, lower Appalachians, and Ozark Mountains, and to eradicate infestations which have gotten out-of-bounds in earlier years in New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, and during this season in Lansing, Michigan.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Authority to control and prevent the spread of this pest is included in the Insect Pest Act of 1905 (7 U.S.C. 141-144), the Plant Quarantine Act of 1912, as amended (7 U.S.C. 151-167) pertaining to domestic plant quarantines, and provisions of the Department of Agriculture Organic Act of 1944, as amended (7 U.S.C. 147a) pertaining to pest control.

July 7, 1954



